

JULY 31, 1976

SPANISH AMNESTY

ANNCR:

NEWS ANALYST FRED GALVAN HAS THESE THOUGHTS ON THE JUST-ANNOUNCED AMNESTY FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS IN SPAIN.  
VOICE:

THE AMNESTY DECREE GOES A LONG WAY TOWARD DEFUSING AN EMOTIONAL ISSUE THAT THE OPPOSITION TO KING JUAN CARLOS' GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN USING. THE AMNESTY ISSUE APPROACHED EXPLOSIVE PROPORTIONS IN THE WEEK FROM JULY THIRD TO ELEVENTH. MORE THAN ONE MILLION SPANIARDS DEMONSTRATED PUBLICLY DEMANDING AMNESTY FOR THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL PRISONERS. UNDER THE DECREE SIGNED BY KING JUAN CARLOS TWO-THIRDS OF THEM -- SOME FOUR HUNDRED -- ARE FREE TO LEAVE THEIR JAILS AND REJOIN THEIR FAMILIES. HOWEVER, SOME TWO-HUNDRED FIFTY PRISONERS ACCUSED OF COMMITTING OR COLLABORATING IN VIOLENT POLITICAL CRIMES ARE STILL IN JAIL.

THE AMNESTY DECREE AND THE MASSIVE DEMONSTRATIONS ADVOCATING IT ILLUSTRATE AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF TODAY'S POLITICAL CLIMATE IN SPAIN. SUCH DEMONSTRATIONS IN WHICH SPANIARDS OF ALL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LEVELS TOOK PART WOULD HAVE BEEN UNDREAMED-OF AS RECENTLY AS A YEAR AGO, WHEN THE FRANCO DICTATORSHIP WAS STILL IN POWER.

THE AMNESTY IS THE LATEST IN A SERIES OF STEPS TAKEN BY KING JUAN CARLOS IN PURSUIT OF HIS AVOWED AIM OF BRINGING DEMOCRACY TO SPAIN. THE FIRST MOVE CAME WHEN JUAN CARLOS TOOK OFFICE LAST NOVEMBER -- AN AMNESTY THAT SET FREE SOME SIX THOUSAND POLITICAL PRISONERS. THE SECOND STEP OCCURRED SOME MONTHS AGO WHEN LAWS GOVERNING ELECTIONS TO THE SPANISH CORTES OR PARLIAMENT WERE LIBERALIZED. ANOTHER MAJOR STEP WAS THE SPANISH

GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO ALLOW PRACTICALLY UNTRAMMELLED ACTIVITIES BY SPAIN'S POLITICAL PARTIES--ALL EXCEPT THE COMMUNISTS.

THESE ARE ALL PARTIAL, SLOW STEPS TOWARD THE GOAL OF INSTALLING A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IN SPAIN--KING JUAN CARLOS AND HIS MINISTERS READILY ADMIT THIS. BUT THEY ARGUE THAT THE SLOW PACE IS NECESSARY IF SPAIN IS TO AVOID POLITICAL UPHEAVALS THAT COULD JEOPARDIZE THE LIBERALIZATION THAT MOST SPANIARDS OF PRACTICALLY ALL POLITICAL TENDENCIES NOW WANT.

THE AMNESTY DECREE HAS BEEN WELL RECEIVED BY SPAIN'S WEST EUROPEAN NEIGHBORS AND THE UNITED STATES. THE STATE DEPARTMENT ON FRIDAY SPELLED OUT THE AMERICAN POSITION ON POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SPAIN. THE DEPARTMENT'S SPOKESMAN ONCE MORE DECLARED THAT THE UNITED STATES WELCOMES ANY MOVES THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT MAY TAKE TO STRENGTHEN MODERATE POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS EMERGING FROM THE TREND TOWARD DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN.

AND IN THIS, THE SPOKESMAN EMPHASIZED, THE UNITED STATES VIEW PARALLELS CLOSELY THAT OF ITS WEST EUROPEAN ALLIES. IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT THE AMNESTY DECREE IS SEEN HERE IN WASHINGTON AND IN OTHER ATLANTIC COMMUNITY CAPITALS.